DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 239 827 RC 014 600

AUTHOR Immerman, Michael
TITLE An Examination of the Locus of Control Construct with American Indians from the Southwestern United States.
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 13p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adults; *American Indians; Analysis of Variance; Females; Language Role; *Locus of Control; Males; Sex Differences; *Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Navajo (Nation); *Pueblo (People); Rotter Internal External Locus of Control Scale

ABSTRACT

An investigation of the relationship between the locus of control construct and the tribe, sex, and first language of two groups of southwestern American Indian adults (85 Navajo and 50 Pueblo subjects), as measured by the Rotter Internal-External Control Scale, confirmed the prediction that the groups would exhibit similar characteristics for the three independent variables. Purposes were to determine the impact of sex upon a specific Indian geographic sample, to examine the two distinct groups within the sample, and to assess the impact of first language on the locus of control construct for the sample. All subjects in the sample were students at a technical/vocational facility in Albuquerque, New Mexico; 42 were male and 93 female. Responses to the Rotter Internal-External Control Scale were analyzed using analyses of variance with the main effects of tribal affiliation, sex and first language (English or one of the Indian languages). The main effect of tribal affiliation, and the interactive effects of tribe, sex, and first language were not significant. Navajos and Pueblos did not differ significantly in the locus of control construct; there were no significant specific Navajo/Pueblo, male/female, or English/Indian language interactions. (MH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED239827

An Examination of the Locus of Control Construct with American Indians from the Southwestern United States

1983

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☑ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

By

Michael Immerman

University of New Mexico

Albuquerque, New Mexico

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Michael Immerman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

RC014600

FEB 1984
RECEIVED
ERIC/CRESS

Abstract

This investigation explores the relationship between the locus of control construct and the tribe, sex, and language of two groups of American Indian adults from the Navajo and Pueblo tribes residing in the Southwestern United States, as measured by the Rotter Internal-External Control Scale, (Rotter, Seaman, and Liverant, 1962). The prediction that these groups would exhibit similar characteristics for the three independent variables was confirmed for all the hypotheses.

An examination of locus of control

The locus of control construct refers to the degree to which an individual accepts the personal responsibility for what happens to him/her as opposed to attributing it to forces beyond his/her control (Trimble and Richardson, 1982). As a general rule, internal control refers to events being a direct consequence of one's own actions or behaviors and thereby under personal control; external control refers to events being unrelated to one's own behavior, i.e. luck, fate, under the control of others, and therefore beyond personal control (Lefcourt, 1966).

The locus of control construct, as a measureable quality, can be traced to the research of E. J. Phares (1957) wherein he concluded that a prediction of behavior within a specific task environment is possible. Phares concluded that categorizing a task as skill will prompt an individual to project the results of his/her actions in future occurrences of the same environment, thereby distinguishing it from the randomness of chance.

This initial examination was followed by the research of W. H. James (1957) in which he noted that individuals exhibiting external control, as measured by the James-Phares Likert Scale (1957), varied their behaviors frequently, evidencing an inability to analyze correctly the skilled tasks presented. It also appeared, in a correlational portion of this research, that individuals who indicate defensive postures, as measured by the Level of Aspiration Board (Rotter, 1954) are characteristically external, however, individuals who demonstrate aggressive patterns are characteristically internal.

The benchmark of locus of control research occurred with the publication of the Internal-External Control Scale (Rotter, 1962), a forced choice measure examining the interpretation of various events in one's life; and the subsequent research analysis of the scale (Rotter, 1966).

Notions of locus of control and diverse ethnicity comparisons are well founded in the current literature and a classic work by Jessor (1968) provides significant relevance to this inquiry. In Jessor's multi-cultural study researchers found that the Spanish sample exhibited the highest degree of externality. The Indian and Anglo samples were virtually identical. These results were replicated by Halpin, Halpin and Whiddon (1980) using an Indian and Anglo sample. These findings, however, are in conflict with the conclusions of Tyler and Holsinger (1975) who found a significant main effect for the variable of race.

The variable of sex, when related to ethnicity, is an equally complex issue. The Tyler and Holsinger (1975) study revealed no significant difference for sex, as did the work of Halpin (1980) These studies are subject to dispute, however, due to the research of Echohawk and Parsons (1977) who found a significant main effect for sex.

This present study was conducted to determine, with more precision (1) the impact of sex upon a specific Indian geographic sample, (2) an examination of the two distinct groups within this geographic sample, and (3) the impact of first language upon this sample regarding the locus of control construct.

It is hypothesized, by the author of this inquiry, that American Indian adults, due to the impact of normal maturation and a shift toward acculturation with the wider mainstream society, will exhibit similar characteristics without any influence of sex, tribal affiliation, or first language.

Sample

The focus of the present investigation is an adult population of Navajo and Pueblo Indians residing in the Southwestern United States. This study examines the region as a compilation of two distinct and separate groups, rather than one "geocultural" unit (Harris, 1979).

Although 150 students comprised the initial sample for this study only 135 actual subjects were tabulated. Students (n=15) were eliminated from consideration due to the control of reading proficiency as a nuisance variable. The Rotter Internal-External Control Scale is rated as a 7.0 grade equivalence (Fry, 1968) therefore those students whose reading performance was not equivalent to the 7.0 level were eliminated from examination.

The data was collected from subjects attending a technical/ vocational facility located in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which serves a national Indian constituency.

The subjects were members of four classes (English I, Basic Mathematics, Intermediate Typing, and Intermediate Optics) and represented a cross-section of the courses offered.

The sample was composed of fifty Pueblo students (representing 68% of the school population) and eighty-five Navajo students (representing 33% of the school population). Forty-two of the Ss were male (representing 18% of the school population) and ninety-three were female (representing 33% of the school population).

Measure

The dependent variable used in this study is the twenty-three item forced choice Rotter Internal-External Control Scale. This instrument has been demonstrated to be a representative and useful tool and has been used in a great number of investigations (Lefcourt,1981).

Examples of populations studied with this instrument include: black students (Gore and Rotter, 1963), tuberculosis patients (Seaman and Evans, 1962), prison inmates (Seaman, 1963), and foreign students (Parsons and Schneider, 1974).

This scale is appropriate for this study due to its brevity, ease of scoring and the emphasis within the instrument to investigate the school/campus environment as it relates to the individual.

The independent variables measured include a) tribal affiliation - Navajo or Pueblo; b) sex; c) first language - English or one of the Indian languages.

Results

Responses to the Rotter Internal External Control Scale were analyzed using analyses of variance with the main effects of tribal affiliation (A); sex (B); and first language (C). The subsequent first order interactions of AB, BC, and AC, as well as the second order interaction of ABC were also examined. The main effect of tribal affiliation as well as the interactive effects of tribe, sex, and first language were not significant. Navajos and Pueblos did not differ significantly in the locus of control construct and there were no specific Navajo/Pueblo, male/female, or English/Indian language interactions that were significant.

The seven specific sources of variance included:

($A, F_{1,127}$ .378 $p > .05$) ($B, F_{1,127}$ .139 $p > .05$)

($C, F_{1,127}$ .070 $p > .05$) ($AB, F_{1,127}$ .011 $p > .05$)

($AC, F_{1,127}$ .001 $p > .05$) ($BC, F_{1,127}$ 2.641 $p > .05$)

($ABC, F_{1,127}$ .338 $p > .05$)

An analysis of the means for the main effect of tribe, using total score as reflecting externality in the locus of control construct, indicated that although the scores for the Navajo adults ranged from 9.55 (S.D. 3.08) for the male English speaker to 10.59 (S.D. 3.47) for the male Indian speaker this range was not significant. Similarly, the range of scores for the Pueblo adults ranged from 8.50 (S.D. 1.87) for the male English speaker to 10.50 (S.D. 4.10) for the male Indian speaker with non significant results.

An analysis of the means for the main effects of sex and first language indicated parallel non significant results.

Discussion

The intent of this investigation was to analyze two distinct groups of American Indians relating to differences of tribe, sex, and language; to this goal this study was successful. The results of this study indicate non significant data for all main effects and interactions. This evidence substantiates the work of Jessor (1968) and Halpin (1980), regarding the variable of race, while concurrently substantiating the research of Tyler (1975) and Halpin (1981), regarding the variable of sex.

This investigation analyzed the previously unexplored variable of first language and found that with this specific sample, the impact of language is non significant. Research to substantiate this result using a myriad of ethnic samples is encouraged in order to further explore and define the impact of this variable.

The author also encourages extended research analyzing specific items within the locus of control construct in order to glean information which may focus upon particular aspects of this construct, i.e. nation, family, government etc. An analysis of these sub constructs may provide useful information and a springboard for further research.

Table 1

Number of Subjects, Means and Standard Deviations for Locus of Control Measure by Tribe, Sex and Language

	Pueblo					
	male			female		
	n	M	S.D.	n	M	S.D.
English	6	8.50	1.87	22	9.86	3.06
Indian	8	10.50	4.10	14	9.21	2.72

	Navajo					
	male			female		
	n	M	S.D.	n	M	S.D.
English	11	9.55	3.08	21	10.05	2.24
Indian	17	10.59	3.47	36	9.78	2.63

pueblo	(50)	9.62	3.02
Navajo	(85)	9.98	2.76
male	(42)	10.00	3.30
female	(93)	9.77	2.64
English	(60)	9.73	2.67
Indian	(75)	9.93	3.00
total population	(135)	9.84	2.85

Table 2

Analyses of Variance for Tribe by Sex by Language Using the Dependent Measure of Locus of Control

source of variation	s.s.	d.f.	F
Locus of Control			
Tribe (A)	3.153	1	0.378
Sex (B)	1.161	1	0.139
Language (C)	0.580	1	0.070
Tribe x Sex (AB)	0.095	1	0.011
Tribe x Language (AC)	0.005	1	0.001
Sex x Language (BC)	22.014	1	2.641
Tribe x Sex x Language (ABC)	2.820	1	0.338
Within	1058.454	127	

* $p < .05$

Bibliography

Echohawk M., and Parsons O., Leadership vs. Behavioraal Problems and Belief in Personal Control Among American Indian Youth. Journal of Social Psychology, 1977, 102, 47-54.

Fry E., A Readability Formula that Saves Time, Journal of Reading 1968, April, 513-516.

Gore P.M. and Rotter J.B., A Personality Correlate of Social Action, Journal of Personality, 1963, 31, 58-64.

Halpin G., Halpin G., and Whiddon T., The Relationship of Perceived Parental Behaviors to Locus of Control and Self-Esteem Among American Indian and White Children, Journal of Social Psychology, 1980, 111, 189-195.

Halpin G., Halpin G., and Whiddon T., Locus of Control and Self-Esteem Among American Indians and Whites: A Cross-Cultural Comparison, Psychological Reports, 1981, 48, 91-98.

Harris L., Characteristics of Self Regard, Locus of Control and Academic Achievement of Selected American Indian Students in Higher Education, unpublished dissertation, University of Washington, 1979.

James W., Internal Verses External Control of Reinforcements as a Basic Variable in Learning Theory, unpublished dissertation, Ohio State University, 1957

Lefcourt H., Internal verses External Control of Reinforcements: A Review, Psychological Bulletin, 1966, 4, 206-220.

Lefcourt H., Research With the Locus of Control Construct: Assessment Methods, New York, Academic Press, 1981.

Jessor R., Graves T., Hanson R., and Jessor S., Society, Personality and Deviant Behavior, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.

Parsons O.A. and Schneider J.M , Locus of Control in University Students in Eastern and Western Societies, Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 1974, 42, 414-420.

Phares E.J., Expectancy Changes in Skill and Chance Situations, Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 1957, 54, 339-342.

Rotter J.B., Social Learning and Clinical Psychology, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersy, Prentice-Hall, 1954.

Rotter J.B., Generalized Expectancies for Internal verses External Control of Reinforcement, Psychological Monographs, 1966, 80, whole 609.

Rotter J.B., Seaman, M., and Liverant, S. Internal verses External Control of Reinforcements; A Major Variable in Behavior Theory, quoted in Lefcourt, 1966.

Seaman M., Alienation and Social Learning in a Reformatory, American Journal of Sociology, 1963, 69, 270-284.

Seeman M., and Evans J., Alienation and Learning in a Hospital Setting, American Sociological Review, 1962, 27, 772-782.

Trimble J., and Richardson, S., Locus of Control Measures Among American Indians, Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 1982, 13, 228-238.

Tyler J.D. and Holsinger D.N., Locus of Control Differences Between Rural American and White Children, Journal of Social Psychology, 1975, 95, 149-155.